

Home Affordability and Livability of Sacramento Top List of Voter Concerns as Fall Elections Approach

Diverse Range of Voters See Reduced Government Fees, Fewer Regulations as Solutions

Sacramento-area voters continue to express serious concerns that the next generation will not be able to afford a home in the region and also continue to strongly believe that high government fees and excessive regulations are a major reason housing prices are so high, a recent comprehensive regional poll found.

The poll of 800 registered voters in Sacramento and Placer counties found that 71.3% were afraid their children or grandchildren would not be able to afford a home in the region, continuing the strong sentiment seen in the 2021 poll where an almost identical-72.2% agreed with that statement.

Adam Hieb, the 2022 president of the North State Building Industry Association, is hopeful government officials will heed their constituents' concerns and work to encourage more housing production and reduce the high fees and regulatory burdens that drive up the cost of new homes.

"Ninety-two percent of all respondents believe the cost of housing and rent in the region is a problem," Hieb said. "And 57% said the fact that too few homes and apartments are being built has contributed to the affordability problem."

Diann Rogers, chief executive officer of the Rancho Cordova Area Chamber of Commerce, said the public also understands what's causing the affordability crisis.

"Three-quarters of the public believe government fees and red tape are major factors for our region's housing crisis," Rogers said. "More than three-quarters of those surveyed said local government leaders should be working to bring down fees, which average nearly \$100,000 per home."

Importantly, 84% of Blacks and 80.5% of Latinos surveyed thought fees should be reduced.

The survey was commissioned by the North State Building Industry Association, the Rancho Cordova Area Chamber of Commerce and the Placer Business Alliance. The poll was conducted between September 8-16 and has a margin of error of +/- 3.46%.

Carol Garcia, president of the Placer Business Alliance and vice president/community relations officer for First Northern Bank, noted that those surveyed recognize that Placer County is a great place for businesses.

“The poll showed that 31.7% of all respondents thought Roseville and Placer County provided the best opportunities for new businesses – and that 54.8% of Placer County residents surveyed thought so,” Garcia said. “The Placer Business Alliance advocates for business-friendly and streamlined policy that cuts through red tape on behalf of the county’s eight top economic and employment sectors.

“The poll also found that 79% of Placer County residents believe that their local business association helps protect and enhance their quality of life, compared to 31% nationwide. Clearly, our business associations in Placer County are doing an outstanding job of helping make our county a great place to live and work.”

A number of other topics were also surveyed:

- Size/Type of Home. 56.4% said they would prefer to live in a larger suburban home with more living space and a back yard even if they have to drive a longer distance to work. Within this group, 61.9% of younger residents aged 18-44 preferred a suburban home. Overall, only a third of all residents polled (36.6%) preferred a smaller home with no yard closer to transit.
- Location of Home. 38.4% said they would prefer to buy a new home in the suburbs and 31.5% wanted to move to a rural area. Just 25.8% preferred to move to downtown or midtown Sacramento.
- How to Get to Work. 40.2% said their preferred way of getting to work is driving their cars, followed by 22.2% who wanted to work from home, and 5.1% who wanted to take transit. Another 25.2% (mainly seniors) said the question did not apply to them.
- Telecommuting. 59% preferred the option of telecommuting for some portion of their work week. (22.3% all the time; 20% most of the time; 16.7% some of the time.) Just 5.7% said never and 4.6% said rarely, with virtually all the rest saying the question did not apply to them.
- Cost of Living: The poll also found that 89.8% thought the overall cost of living is a problem, with 51.5% saying it was a very big problem.

The BIA’s Hieb said the business community and homebuilders are eager to work with local governments to begin solving the affordability crisis.

“One of the big takeaways from the poll is nearly half of the respondents – 44.6% – say they are likely to move out of the region in the next few years. An exodus of even

a fraction of that amount would be a tremendous blow to our region's economy and make it challenging for our businesses to find and retain employees," Hieb said.

"There's no question that our elected officials need to take steps to improve housing affordability."

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